STOCKWOOD CRAFT MUSEUM, GARDENS & THE MOSSMAN COLLECTION

The Bedfordshire Local History Association is pleased to announce that an introductory talk and guided tour of the Stockwood Craft Museum and Gardens, including the Mossman Collection of horse drawn vehicles, has been arranged for Sunday, October 5th, 1997. The museum is situated in Stockwood Country Park, Farley Hill, Luton, (see map) there is free parking and facilities for people with disabilities. As well as the many crafts carried out and displayed in the museum there is the fine display of horse and manually drawn vehicles of the Mossman collection. The attractive gardens illustrate various periods in English gardens and the Dutch and Italian influences. They include a mediaeval Herb garden, Victorian kitchen garden, Italianate garden, knot garden and a William & Mary Dutch garden. Stockwood gardens maintain the National Collection of Aubrieta, Arabis and Cortaderia (pampas grass).

The programme will be as follows :-
2.00 p.m. Introductory Talk by a member of the museum staff, followed by a guided tour of the collections and gardens.
3.30 p.m. *Tea if required (see details below).
After tea there will be ample time, before the facility closes at 6.00 p.m., for members to visit areas of particular interest to themselves.

*TEA, as the museum is open to the general public on Sundays it is necessary to pre-book both the number in our party that require tea and the type of tea required to ensure adequate seating and supplies so when booking please indicate your requirements from the following choice :-
A) Traditional Cream Tea, comprising half a round each of salmon with cucumber and egg mayonnaise with cress sandwiches plus scone, jam and cream plus a pot of tea, coffee or a glass of chilled semi-skimmed milk. Cost £3.50 per person.
B) Pot of tea (70p)/ cup of coffee (75p)/ mug of coffee (80p)/ hot chocolate (85p), choice of Danish pastries, scones, gateaux etc. from 70p each.
C) Tea etc. not required.
Please indicate the number of persons requiring sustenance against “A” or “B” on the form. If neither is indicated it will be assumed that the choice is “C”.

There will be a charge of £1.50 to cover the cost of the introductory talk and guided tour and charge must be paid in advance at the time of booking and must reach Mrs. Swain by 12th. September 1997, booking forms are enclosed with this newsletter. Do not send payment for tea with the booking form as this will be payable direct to the catering staff by you on the day.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1997

The Annual General meeting of the Association was held on Saturday the 10th. of May 1997. Michael Kemp the retiring Chairman reviewed the years activities, particularly the very successful campaign led by Martin Lawrence to ensure that the Bedfordshire Magazine was able to continue publication with a considerably enhanced subscriber portfolio. He emphasized the debt of gratitude the Association owed to its officers and committees for its continued success, he particularly thanked Elizabeth Adey and Ron Gregory who were not seeking re-election to the Executive Committee.
Peter Wood, Honorary Treasurer, presented an audited report of the years income and expenditure and compared it to the previous year. Subscription income was little changed although there had been a drop in the miscellaneous income. Considerable savings in expenditure had been made, particularly in the costs of meetings and in the printing of the

Continued on p. 3
Manors and manorial records: part 1

Kevin Ward

The term ‘manor’ is commonly used to describe a Manor House (likely to have been the home of the Lord of the Manor) and the Lordship of a Manor, a title concerned with ownership of the residue of Manors as a form of landed estate. Historically, however, a manor was essentially an area of land. As Jacob's Law Dictionary (1762) records: ‘... after the Conquest [1066] there were certain circuits of ground granted by the King... to some Barons or men of like worth, for them and their heirs to dwell upon and exercise jurisdiction,... as the King thought fit to grant...’. The King was granting land and franchised rights (jurisdiction) over it. That involved holding a court.

As such an area of land the manor produced records common to the management of any estate - accounts, rentals, surveys, terriers, extents and title deeds - but holding a Court set it apart from the typical unit of local estate management. By the late medieval period holding a private court for the estate tenants over whom a Lord exercised certain rights of jurisdiction effectively served to define a manor. For this reason the manorial court rolls, the formal record of the court's judicial and administrative proceedings, are the principal manorial record and the only records peculiar to manors.

Thousands of territorial units were granted as manors but counties were not neatly divided into manorial units as with parishes: variations in size, composition, and management were considerable. A manor might encompass a whole village (with boundaries coterminal with the ecclesiastical parish) or overlap more than one village. Most often, however, villages/parishes included several manors. The composition of manors also varied greatly including some relative combination of the following component elements: Demesne, the manor (farm)house and cultivable land which the Lord himself occupied; Land held by tenants - cultivable land - open field and inclosed - held by free and unfree/copyhold tenures and most likely the largest part of the manor, and Waste - open and uncultivated land - often too poor for cultivation and land on which tenants came to have protected 'common rights' and including 'greens', ancient highway, and highway verge.

In researching manors the Victoria County History gives the descent of ownership of each known manor down to this century. Many manors will have disappeared long before and it should never be assumed that records will have survived for a particular manor. Survival of court rolls depends on many factors such as the stability and continuity of ownership of a manor. Transfer of ownership of manors means records may be in private custody, local record offices or national repositories. There is as much scope for diversity as with deeds to freehold land. In tracing records the key point is the title/ownership and descent of the manor. Usefully, however, a Manorial Documents Register in London exists to record details of all known surviving manorial records.

The formal writings produced by a court in conducting its unique business - its Court Rolls - can date from the 13th century. Legal usefulness to administrators accounts for their careful compilation and retention. Physically their form and size varies greatly according to the circumstances of the individual manor (the frequency of its meetings, its size, composition, jurisdiction, traditions, etc.). In the mediæval period they usually consist of parchment strips of varying length sewn end to end or head to head with linen thread. From the 15th century, paper is also used and by the 18th century most active manors used a book form although the documents are still Court 'Rolls'.

Despite considerable variations, much of the procedure and terminology of administration was common to all. Whether in Latin or in English, the researcher will meet many technical and archaic terms for which reference books will be needed. Most post-medieval Court Rolls are relatively consistent in format and content: for each court held a heading records the title of the court, the name of the Lord/Lady of the Manor, the Steward conducting the business of the court and the date. Commonly the names of juries/jurors or 'homages' are given and appointed local officers of the manor. Rolls illustrate the manor as a self-regulating and communal form of administration dependent on the co-operation of the local village community. The extent and range of local officials varied according to the nature and jurisdiction of a particular manor. In urban manors there may be brook lookers, leather sealers, ale tasters, scavengers and constables. In rural manors there may be field (and fen) reeves, thirdboroughs, moletakers, pinders, woodwards, heywards, etc. to regulate the open and common fields.

The business of Courts was primarily the administration of copyhold tenure, the transfer and regulation of copyhold land (subject of part two of this article) - increasingly, certainly by the 19th century but often earlier, the staple business of most surviving courts - and secondly, the creation of bye-laws - often called pains, orders, ordinances recorded at length on Rolls and constituting a body of local law based on the 'custom' of the manor - and their regulation and enforcement through local officials. Within rural manors this law was concerned with agrarian matters but also impinged on the social life of the community - harbouring of strangers, gaming in alehouses, bull baiting, pollution of watercourses, repair of streets, and nuisances. The Court often maintained the 'assizes' of bread and ale ensuring the produce of bakers and

Continued on p. 3
**Manors and manorial records: pt.1**

Continued from p. 2

Brewers met required standards of quality and quantity. Tanners and butchers were also closely regulated and manors effectively licensed many of these activities.

Court Rolls also record breaches of bye-laws. 'Presentments' (reported accusations) by the jurors or individuals (often court officials) are the source of much court business. An official, such as the heyward, might report someone for allowing a pig to go unringed or a juror might present a neighbour for leaving a dunghill in the street. Penalties included amercements i.e. small fines (amounts often being fixed by affereors) although older less conventional treatments such as ducking of women can be found. Court Rolls are a vivid source, full of richly detailed insights into the social and economic life and mores of local people in the past. They offer excellent family history potential with references to the land people owned or occupied, where they lived and traded, their occupations, misdemeanours, and evidence of their mobility. Historians have used rolls to 'reconstruct' families and communities and for evidence of population, social structure, the pattern of land transmission and from a sociological point of view, the 'concerns of the community' - how it regulated itself.

**Annual General Meeting**

Cont. from p. 1

Newsletter, which had resulted in a greater surplus of income over expenditure. A number of members were paying by standing order. He had found that this was a considerable help in reducing administration time and wished to encourage more members to pay by this method, he had plenty of suitable forms available. In conclusion he recommended that the present subscription rates be retained for the current year.

The reports were accepted and the meeting proceeded to elect officers, executive committee members and auditors.

As a result of the election the Associations Executive Committee is as follows:- Chairman - Harry Arch; Secretary - Joan Curran; Treasurer - Peter Wood; committee members - Gillian Boyes, Stephen Coleman, Martin Lawrence, Brian Lazelle, Jean Masters, Ray Seldon, Linda Swain and Jean Williams. The Association’s honorary auditor is R. M. Dolman FCCA.

On taking the chair Harry Arch thanked the Michael Kemp for his valuable contribution to the continued success of the Association during his service on the Executive Committee and latterly as Chairman.

On completion of the official business of the meeting the members attending enjoyed a talk entitled Manors and Their Records by Kevin Ward of the County Record Office. Because of the interest this subject aroused we thought it deserved a wider audience and Kevin has kindly agreed to write a series of articles for History in Bedfordshire, the first instalment is printed above.

**Publications Working Group - A Report**

Martin Lawrence

The Local History association is now a well established feature of the County scene and has played an active role, since its inception, in encouraging the writing and publication of local history.

The exhibition of publications at Houghton Conquest and during the Bedfordshire Festival at Shuttleworth demonstrated the wealth of material being researched and published. This newsletter has regularly advertised new books as they come onto the market and articles have been written to promote the County Record Office, Bedfordshire Historical Record Society and The Bedfordshire Magazine. Our recent campaign concerning the latter has made a significant contribution to its immediate survival.

The Executive Committee now wish to explore the possibility of using our network of local historians to collect together or generate research with the intention to publish an occasional series of booklets of countywide interest. It has been demonstrated already that our talents are rich and a group have successfully collaborated in the writing of “Southill and the Whitbreads 1795-1995”, which was published recently.

A Publications Working Group has been set up to look at the feasibility of such a project. They have produced the following principles as a first step towards a publication policy -

1. The Association will support the writing and publishing of material by local historians in the County, particularly BLHA members, wherever the material is published (e.g. The Bedfordshire Magazine).
2. The Association will promote and advertise the publications of members, both society and individual.
3. The Association will not seek to duplicate good practice in the publication of local history elsewhere in the County.
4. The Association will publish countywide material using the resources of its network.

Your Committee has endorsed this policy and agreed to the idea of a series of booklets on Bedfordshire in the years 1815 to 1914. We will not be rushing into such a project and will be consulting widely on all the issues involved. We would like to hear your views and would request that you write to the Honorary Secretary or Editor with your ideas and suggestions.

**THE 18TH. CENTURY'S UNDERCLASS**

In 1759 at the Bedford Quarter Sessions Jonathan Quine, labourer, master of the workshop in the parish of Maulden, was charged that he “neglected providing sustenance for William Carter 18 months of age permitting William Carter the elder, suffering violent sickness, to lie on insufficient bed with covering & sufficient relief & putting 18 at least men women and children into 2 rooms promiscuously to peril their health”.

In 1785 Sarah Mathews and Mary Naughton were committed to the Epiphany Sessions of 17th. October on suspicion of setting fire to the workhouse in Maldon [Maulden].

July 1997
The Local History Lecture Competition will be held in 1997/8 and is sponsored jointly by the Bedfordshire County Record Office and the Bedfordshire Local History Association. Entries to the Competition are invited from any one, whether a member of the association or not, who is interested in the history of Bedfordshire.

The 30 minute lectures should be original works, not previously delivered. They should have a local history "flavour" and may be illustrated with slides or overheads and should be relevant for their intended audiences - children, the general public or other local historians. They may be the result of a group project or individual research.

The resources of the County Record Office will be available for researchers and help will be available from members of the staff of the CRO with specialist knowledge of particular subjects. You are urged to make early use of these generous facilities.

Judging will be in two phases, firstly a short list will be selected from the synopses submitted by the authors. Secondly the finalists' lectures will be judged immediately following their delivery in front of an audience. The judges will be experts drawn from the two sponsoring organizations, assisted as necessary by outside specialists. The judges' decisions will be final.

In the first, synopsis, stage the judges will be looking at the chosen subject matter, together with the suitability of the lecture for its intended audience. Indications of research sources and breadth of coverage of the subject, together with any proposed use of visual aids and graphics will be important considerations.

For the final judging, at the presentation of the finalists' lectures, the general structure of the lecture and the presentational style will be important, as will be its adherence to the submitted synopsis of the lecture and time keeping within the 30 minutes allowed. Audience reactions and the handling of the 15 minute question time will also be assessed.

Entry forms are available from the County Record Office (phone 01234 228833) or from the Honorary Secretary of the Bedfordshire Local History Association Mrs. J Curran, 7, Castle Close, Totternhoe, Dunstable, LU6 1QJ. (phone 01525 221963). Completed entry forms should be returned to Mrs. Curran by the end of October 1997.

A synopsis of the lecture on not more than two sides of A4 paper should be sent Mrs. Curran (NOT THE CRO) by the end of December 1997. The shortlist, selected by the judges from the written synopses, will be announced by the end of January 1998. The finalists' lectures will be delivered in front of the judges and an audience, at a time and place to be announced in the Spring of 1998.

All lectures prepared for the competition can, of course, be delivered to general audiences following the judges' winning announcement.

If, for some reason, a potential competitor has to drop out after submitting an entry form they are requested to advise Mrs. Curran accordingly at the earliest opportunity.

Bedfordshire Local History Conference 1997

The 1997 Local History Conference, hosted in Dunstable by the Dunstable and District Local History Society again proved the versatility and organizational ability of member Societies. The talks ranged from archaeology viz. The Hidden History of Dunstable by Dave Warren which described the prehistory of Dunstable pieced together from the extensive excavations carried out in the district by the Manshead Archaeological Society, through church architectural history viz. the History of the Priory by Sheila Furnell, to end with an enjoyable talk on the trials and tribulations, and fun of being a book publisher Publishing Books on Local History by Paul Bowes. At midday we were given guided tours of the Priory and ancient Dunstable. That of the Priory complemented the excellent talk on its history and the town walk gave a glimpse of the historical importance of the town from Roman times. The well organized tour proved a suitable preparation for the enjoyable lunch that followed. Congratulations Dunstable.

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